

Open Session Submitted to: SHOT MEETING, Milan, Italy, 24-27 Oct, 2019

Title: Technology and irregular warfare in the Twentieth Century

Organizers

Alexis De Greiff A.

Departamento de Sociología & Centro de Estudios Sociales
Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Bogotá

Email: ahdegreiffa@unal.edu.co

Simón Uribe

Departamento de Ciencia Política
Universidad del Rosario, Bogotá

Email: simonuribe@gmail.com

Description

Arms, explosives, maps, garment and physical infrastructures constitute some examples of the objects fabricated, used or adapted in modern warfare. The relationship between war and technology has interested historians of technology from the outset of the discipline. Moreover, it has been also a primordial concern of general historians. However, most of the literature on the subject focuses in wars or conflicts between states (regular wars). In this session, we will address a less studied and, therefore, poorly understood dimension of the problem: the connections between different kinds of technologies and *irregular* warfare in the Twentieth Century. We are especially interested in cases of decolonization struggles, post-colonial conflicts, insurgent warfare and terrorism in the Twentieth Century. This entails exploring how state agents, as well as insurgents or terrorist groups, develop technological tools and systems for attacking, surviving and defending. These technologies are often combined or complemented with immaterial technologies such as military strategy, deception tactics, intelligence techniques and geographical knowledge, among others. We shall discuss the ways in which these socio-technical objects and practices are built, transmitted, replicated and subverted. In this way, we seek to critically examine how states, counter-states and para-states expertise developed, interact, and put into practice. In particular, we are interested in exploring scenarios and cases that involve actors which have historically defied or represented a threat to the state like guerrillas, revolutionary groups, mafias, terrorist organizations and large criminal networks.